1920 - 1965

MARY PICKFORD IN ENGLAND

About:

Mary Pickford visited England on 17 known occasions. In total we know of Mary being here across 150+ days. Unofficially of course this could be a lot more. I'm not certain every visit was documented or even photographed if it was not newsworthy enough on that particular occasion.

Contents:

1920's (Pages 4-44)
1920 – Jun 21st – Jun 28th (7 days)
1921 – Nov 16th – Nov 23rd (7 days)
1924 – Apr 19th - May 16th+ (28 days+)
1925 – Oct 27th - Oct 29th? (2 days?)
1926 – Jun 29th (min) - Jul 4th (5 days+)
1928 – Early May - May 7th (3 days+) (arrived in Paris 8th May.)
1929 – Oct 21st - Oct 25th (4 days)

1930's (Pages 45-69)
1931 – May 18th - May 27th (9 days)
1937 – Mar 10th - Mar 27th+ (17 days) / May (5 days+)
1938 – Apr 6th - Apr 15th (9 days)
1939 – Jun 5th - Jun 13th+ (8 days+)

1940's (Pages 70-77)
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1956 – Jun 13th - (3 days+)

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1965 – Sep 25th - (3 days+)

1920

Monday June 21st, 1920: - Joining fellow newly weds Frances Marion and Fred Thomson on a European honeymoon - The SS Lapland's arrival of Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks to Southampton, England.
Mary with her unmissable head attire, looking out at the sea of fans as the liner docks into Southampton.

The SS Lapland - Had her maiden voyage in 1909, converted to a troop carrier during WW1, and began carrying passengers again in 1918. In 1933 she was sold for scrap. It took 9 days to cross the Atlantic after leaving New York on June 12th.

A great feeling as Mary steps onto a new continent for the first time!

Video - https://www.britishpathe.com/asset/48165/

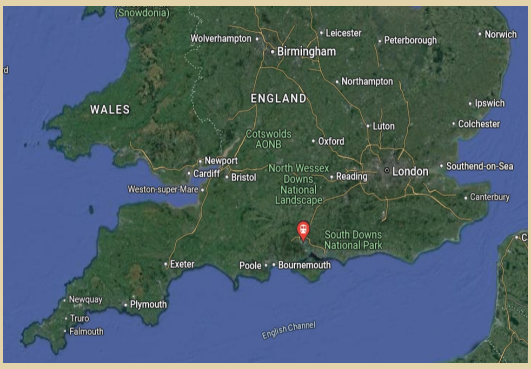
It’s all smiles on terra-ferma, as the couple leaves the deck of the liner SS Lapland.

More discussions of their plans for their honeymoon and photograph’s for the press.

21st June 1920 - Mary Pickford at Southampton station, signing autographs on the start of her European tour.

Left - They depart Southampton docks via train, heading for Waterloo Station in London.

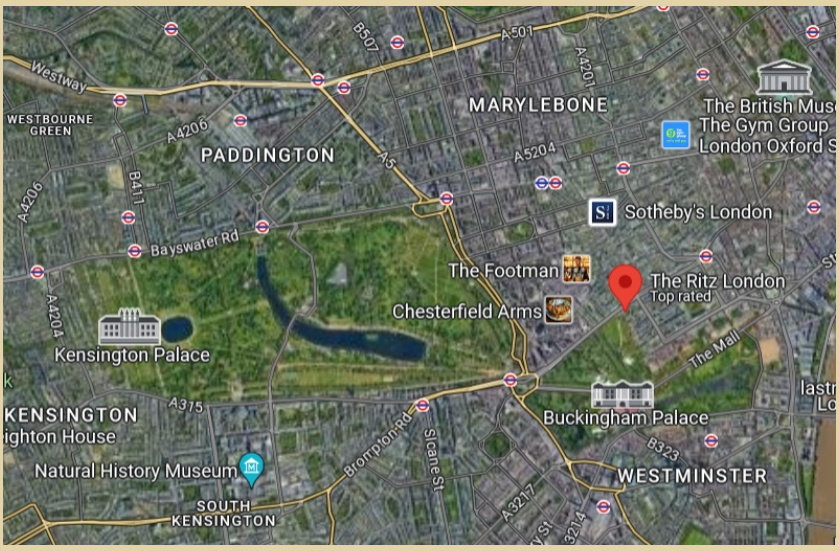
Below – map location of Southampton Central train station, which is around 84 miles from central London.



Douglas Fairbanks and his wife Mary Pickford arrive at Waterloo Station, London.

Monday June 21st. Mary and Douglas look down at their fans from the lobby window as they check-in at the Ritz Hotel in London, England on their honeymoon.

Monday evening - they went to see a play in the West End, no further details on which one and what location. One possibility is ‘Jigsaw’ which opened on the 16th June at the Hippodrome and had a ‘Royal Box’ (Fairbanks made a short speech from a ‘Royal Box’ after a 10 minute applause on their arrival).



Left – map location of The Ritz hotel, 150 Piccadilly, London W1J 9BR

KILLING MISS MARY PICKFORD WITH KINDNESS AT THE THEATRICAL GARDEN PARTY.—THE POLICE HAVE RAISED HER ON TO HER HUSBAND'S SHOULDERS TO MAKE HER ESCAPE TO HER CAR.

Tuesday 22nd June 1920 - at the Theatrical Garden Party in London (location details in 1939 section), being lifted away from adoring crowds as they make their way out. Mary makes light of it with a tongue-in-cheek smile despite exaggerated reports in newspapers of her ‘being frightened for her life’

Wednesday June 23rd, London – Morning, Douglas and Mary posing for a few photographs before going about their schedule for today.

No records of the exact room have been told that I know of, but the closest match viewing room images comparing to the above image on their website would be the Deluxe King room.

My predicted location from where Mary and Doug are located looking over the balcony (image on the next page).

NOW & THEN

Top (1920) - Doug pointing something out, whilst Mary looks on with a little shock on her face.

Right (Modern) - Image taken from the furthest right front side of the hotel.

The white facade' building on the left is easily identifiable against the left building in the 1920 image.

The centre building was rebuilt at some stage and looks different here.
Finally the third building on the right is also easily comparable to the old photo above, confirming the location.

Wednesday June 23rd, London - Unsure of exact location, although Mary is still wearing the same dress and hat she had on at Wimbledon (next few pages), so a good possibility is that this could be them leaving the The Ritz Hotel to drive to the Wimbledon Tennis tournament.

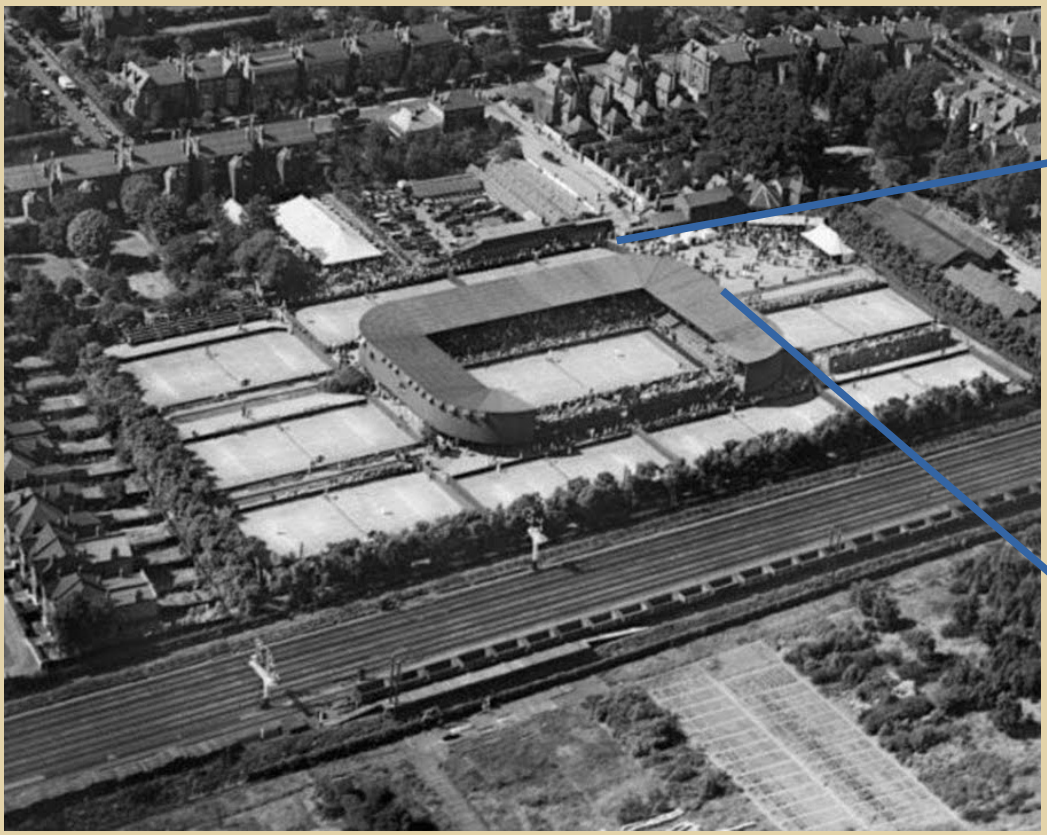
Wednesday 23rd June 1920, Doug and Mary visited Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Championships which were being held between 21st June and July 3rd of that year. Images show them upon arrival moving through the crowds.

Video - https://www.britishpathe.com/asset/111945/

Back in those days cars were driven right into the ground, seen here parked right outside Centre Court, on the corner on the ‘A’ stand (see now and then page for location). Below, a more detailed photograph of little further back outside the entrance.

They move Mary and Doug into a small hut area, in the background you can see the order-of-play boards they had around the grounds (seen in more detail in the photo below from a few years later).

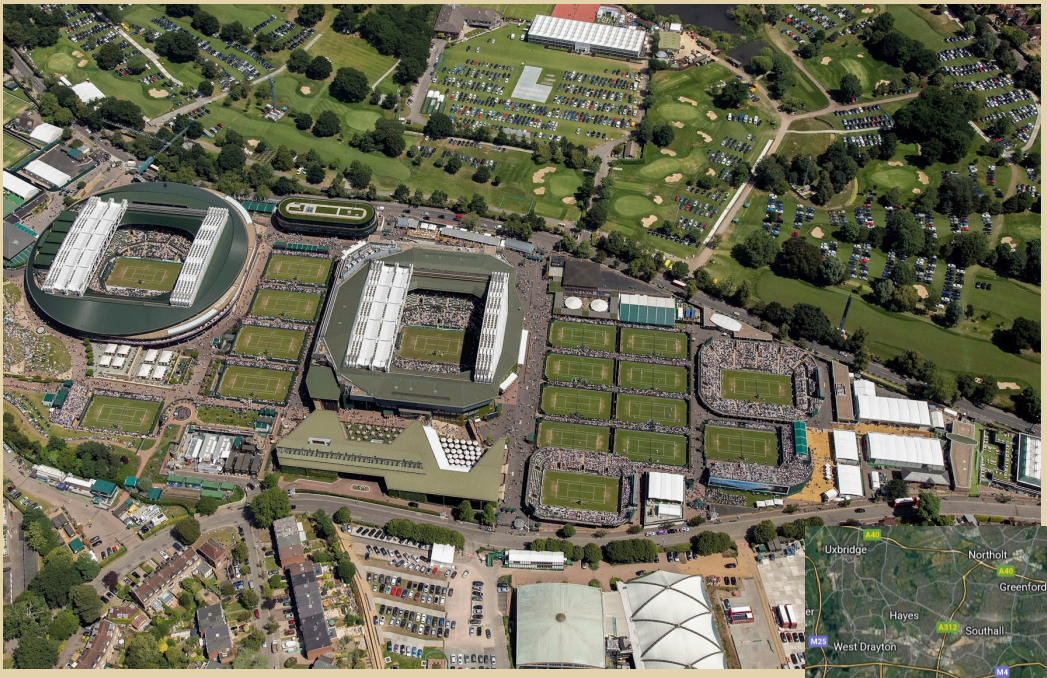
NOW & THEN

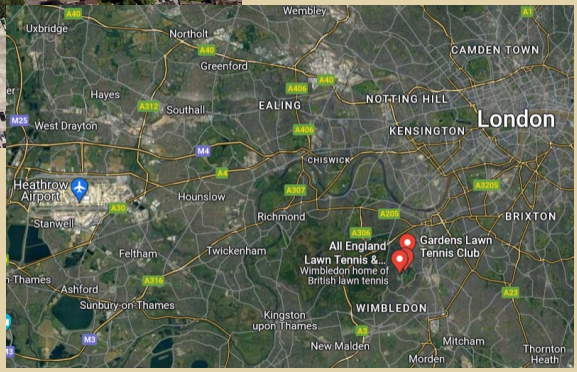


The entrance, you can see via the top picture on the previous page, the corner of the ‘A’ Stand section of Centre Court where Mary and Doug got dropped off and left beside.

The order of play boards in the 1921 Mary video were around this area.

Early 1920’s view above with train tracks running parallel with the old Centre Court / Modern view below, showing a total change of the whole surrounding area.





Right – location of Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Association site, only around 9 miles to central London.

Friday/Saturday June 25th/26th 1920

They drove down to the Kent coast for the weekend, possibly on the Friday to have a weekend away from the crowds of the London area after being invited by First Viscount Northcliffe. They stayed at a small cottage that was part of the Viscount's huge estate (more details next couple of pages).

Elmwood Cottage, 48 Reading Street, Broadstairs, Kent, CT10 3AY, England

From historical Mary interviews, she talks of fans sitting on the wall (below picture) outside waiting for a glimpse of her in her nightgown.

Below – map location of Broadstairs, the village was around 80 miles to central London

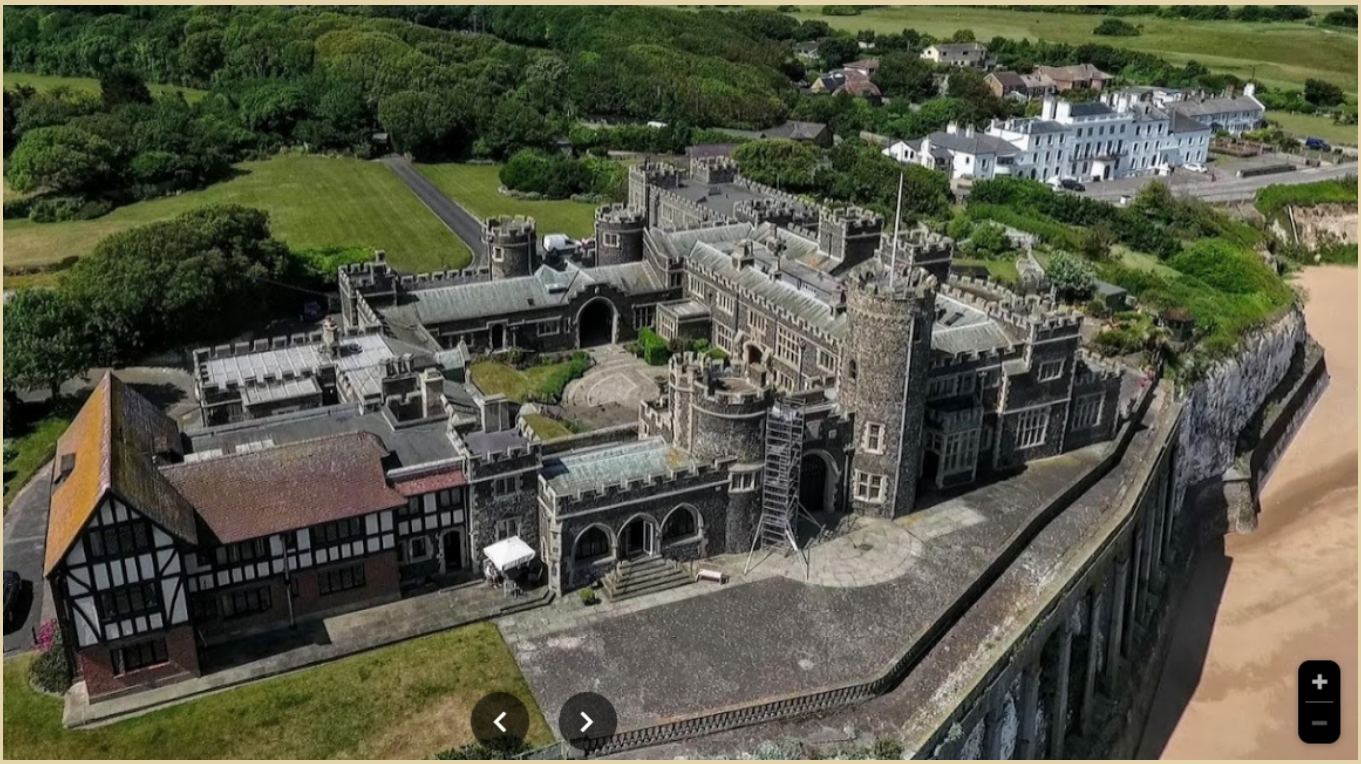
Other area's of the estate comprising of Elmwood House and Farm, Kingsgate Castle, purchased by Alfred Harmsworth (1st Viscount Northcliffe) comprised 256 acres, which included an 18 hole golf course, and private road down to Joss Bay beach, which Mary and Doug may well have used on their stay here.

The Viscount died in 1922, just two years after May and Doug's visit.

Elmwood Cottage

The Clock House

Originally was the stable house, the viscount converted it to store luxury cars.



The other parts of the large estate, was the 18 hole golf course (seen in the image below) and Kingsgate Castle sitting on the cliff edge, was reportedly tried to be torpedoed during the war but various attempts missed.

Privately owned 18-hold golf course.

Mary and Doug had certainly a more private time away from London, I think it's almost certain Douglas at least had a round on the golf course during their stay.

A visit to the beach was easy accessible via the private road they had access to.

Private Road To Beach

Elmwood Farm

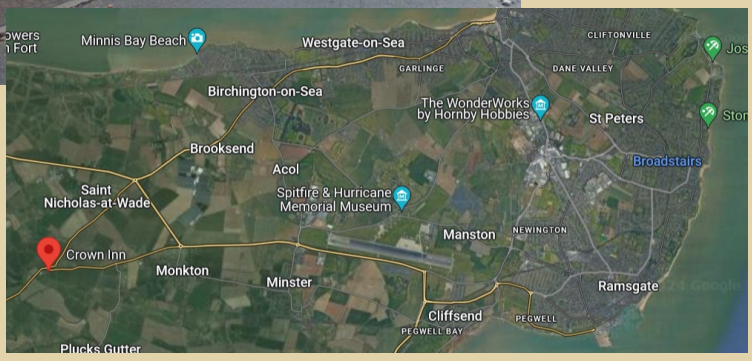
Cottage and Clock House Location

NOW & THEN

Mary and Douglas popped in for a drink or two in this pub (The Crown Inn, Ramsgate Road, Sarre, CT7 0LF) sometime during their visit that weekend.

Above – Photo 1922 (2 years after their visit) / Below – Modern image, very little change over 500 years bar a small extension on the left side.

Right – map location of the pub, in comparison to their stay in Broadstairs, a distance of around 10 miles.



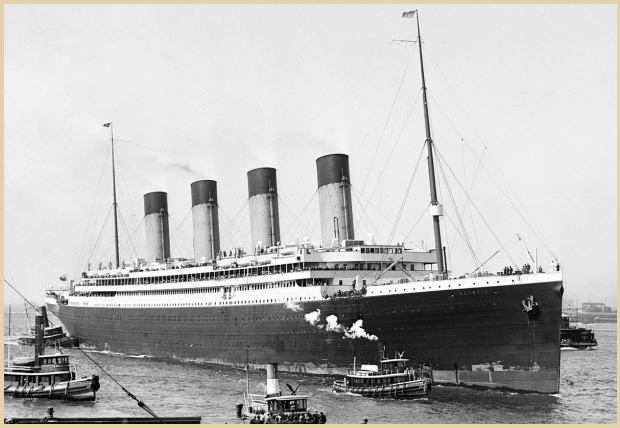
Monday June 28th 1920 - Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks depart the Ritz Hotel in London for a tour of Europe

That ended their first visit to England. After they left England on the 28th June 1920, they toured Europe for 21 days, and then left for America by boat on July 20th, finally arriving back in America on July 29th 1920.

Video - https://www.britishpathe.com/asset/152762/

1921

Their second trip to Europe was slightly different, they arrived in England on the 16th November *after* visiting France before-hand. Mary and her mother would arrive in Victoria Station at 7:30pm by train (picture above) after an initial boat crossing from Calais. Douglas would later meet up with them in London as he had a prior engagement, he took a plane from Paris which landed at Croydon Aerodrome that day.



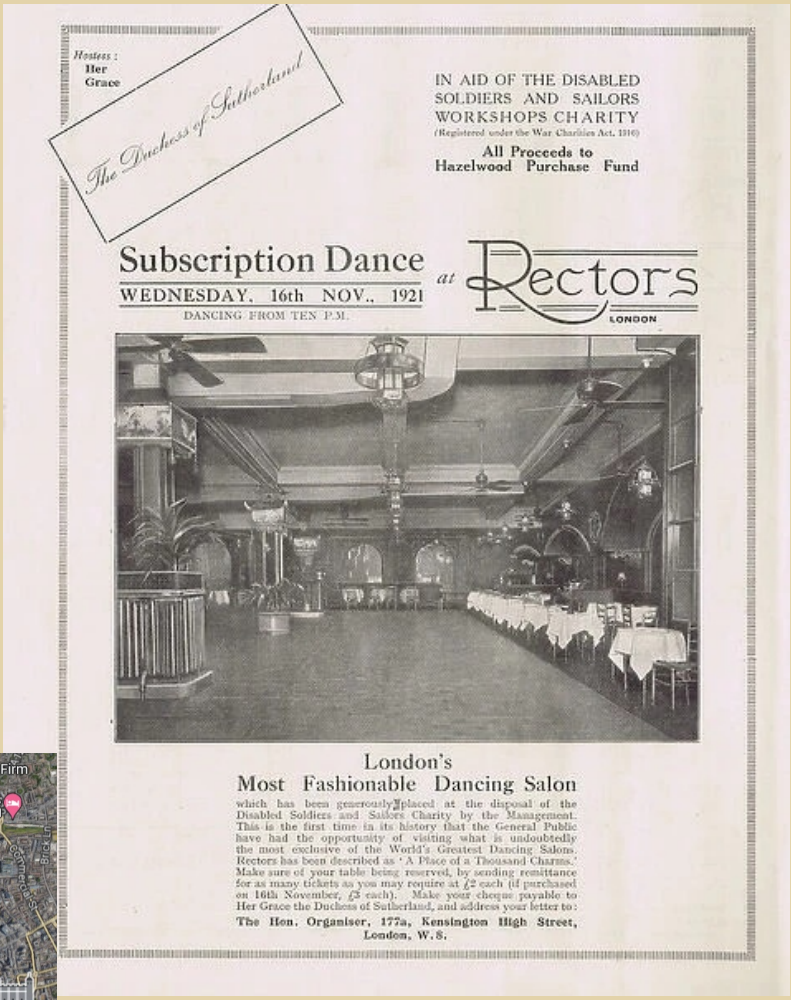
Whilst not sailing directly to England, they made their European trip on-board the RMS Olympic. Which had her maiden voyage In 1911, she retired in 1935 and started to be scrapped the same year which took two years to complete. Transatlantic times were around 6 days for cruising speeds.

Taken at Rectors: showing Lady Maidstone, Lord Maidstone, Mr. Douglas Fairbanks, Miss Mary Pickford, Her Grace the Duchess of Sutherland and Mr. Robert Grant

16th Nov 1921 - at Rectors Dance Hall, 31 Tottenham Court Road, London. Include Lord and Lady Maidstone, Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford, the Duchess of Sutherland and Robert Guest, there for the Subscription Dance in aid of the disabled soldiers and sailors workshop charity.

Right - advert for the dance they were invited to.

The building, which no longer exists, was first born as a jazz-club in 1919, then the aforementioned dance hall, then a nightclub (UFO Club) in 1966. Other uses include, a public house, a fast food restaurant, before being demolished and redeveloped as an Odeon Cinema in 1981.



Hostess: Her Grace

The Duchess of Sutherland

IN AID OF THE DISABLED SOLDIERS AND SAILORS WORKSHOPS CHARITY

(Registered under the War Charities Act, 1916)

All Proceeds to Hazelwood Purchase Fund

Subscription Dance at Rectors LONDON

WEDNESDAY, 16th NOV., 1921

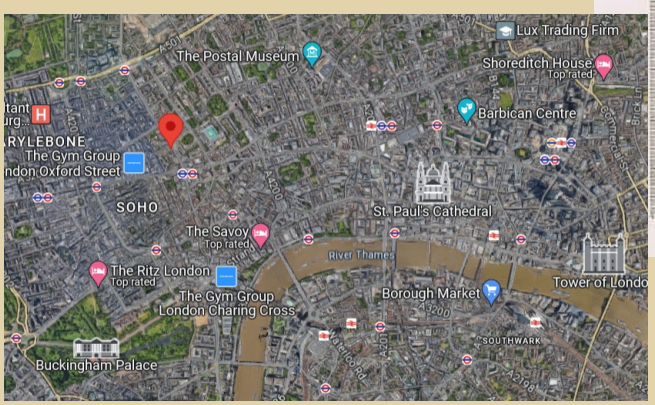
DANCING FROM TEN P.M.

London's Most Fashionable Dancing Salon

which has been generously placed at the disposal of the Disabled Soldiers and Sailors Charity by the Management. This is the first time in its history that the General Public have had the opportunity of visiting what is undoubtedly the most exclusive of the World's Greatest Dancing Salons. Rectors has been described as 'A Place of a Thousand Charms.' Make sure of your table being reserved, by sending remittance for as many tickets as you may require at £2 each (if purchased on 16th November, £3 each). Make your cheque payable to Her Grace the Duchess of Sutherland, and address your letter to:

The Hon. Organiser, 177a, Kensington High Street, London, W.8.

Below – map location in London of the former site of the dance hall.



Promoting her film ‘Suds’ as seen in the background, some cross promotion opportunity with ‘The Tatler’ and ‘Eve’ magazines doesn’t go amiss!

On the morning of Thursday 18th November they met the Duke of York whilst being entertained by the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland at their Stafford House residence in St James's, London.

Originally known as York House, she later became known as Lancaster House in 1970.

Map location of Stafford House (Lancaster) a pretty prime location in relation to Buckingham Palace!

NOW & THEN

That evening (18th Nov), they went to see ‘Sally’ the musical at the Winter Garden Theatre at 166 Drury Lane, Holborn, London, WC2B 5PW.

Above - Oldest photo I could find from 1946 / Below - Modern photo.

The theatre closed and re-opened as the Winter Garden Theatre in 1919.
The theatre closed in 1959, and was sadly demolished in 1965. The new building now called the ‘Gillian Lynne Theatre’ since 2018, before that it was known as the ‘New London Theatre’ from it’s opening in 1973.

1924

19th April 1924. - Photo with the mother/mother-in-law on-board the RMS Olympic as it docks into port at Southampton on their return back to England after a three year gap.

Douglas using his knee as a table for Mary to write an autograph for one of the sailors!

Mary Pickford and her husband Douglas Fairbanks waving to the crowd as they arrive in Southampton, 19th April 1924.

Douglas and Mary on their arrival in Southampton are greeted by the British theatrical impresario Charles Blake Cochran.

Monday April 21st 1924 – Mary and Douglas visited the ‘real’ Haddon Hall, ahead of the release of silent film, (despite in-correct reports, the movie was not filmed in the UK).

They stayed at the Palace Hotel, Buxton (pictured above) which was 12 miles away from Haddon Hall itself.

The party were charmed with all they saw. Miss Pickford said she had never seen such a lovely English home in her life, and that she had taken some liberties with the hall in her latest film, but she hoped everyone would like it much.
Tea was partaken the famous old cottage, and before leaving, the world’s sweetheart signed dozens of autograph albums.

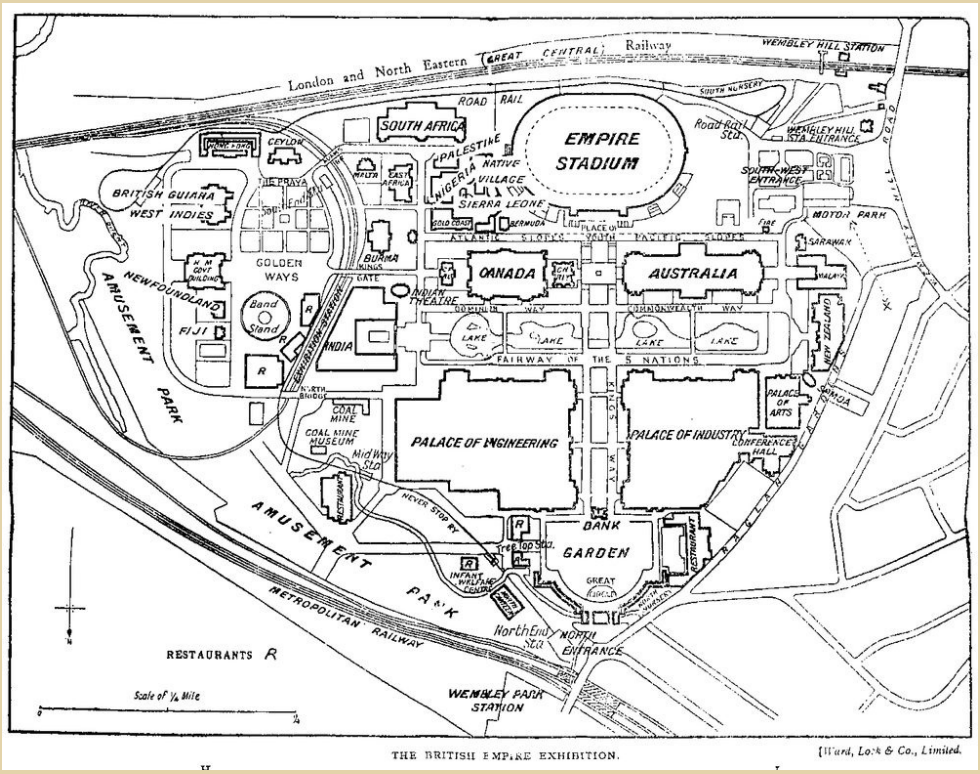
As they motored away for Nottingham, the famous film stars had an enthusiastic send off by an admiring crowd.

Haddon Hall, Bakewell, Derbyshire
There are no known photo’s of Mary and Doug visited Haddon Hall, but I’d thought I would include some images of what they went to see that day 100 years ago.

Haddon Hall, Banqueting Hall
1924 film image on the left with their representation built on location at the Pickfords studio in America, and right the real location shot. I don’t think anyone was none the wiser unless you visited the real location!

Right – map location of Haddon Hall in England.

After leaving Buxton they went on to visit Nottingham, which was around 44 miles away.

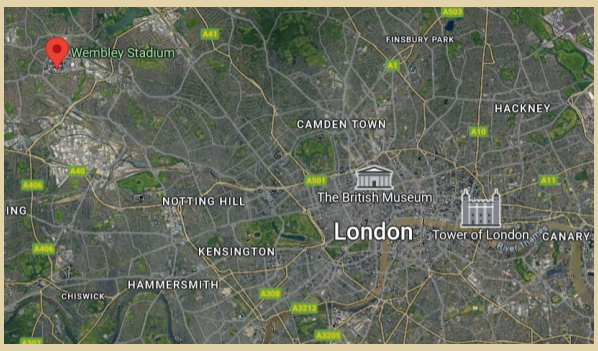


Mary and Douglas attended the opening of the British Empire Exhibition in Wembley, London on the 23rd April 1924.

The exhibition was a huge costly (most of the buildings including Wembley Stadium (then known as the Empire Stadium) were built especially for the exhibition, although some (like the aforementioned stadium did at least survive post exhibition!) event to strengthen the bonds within the Empire, stimulate trade and demonstrate British greatness both abroad and at home, with 56 area's, for each country of the then commonwealth.

The event pulled in 18 million people during 23rd April to 1st November 1924, despite that it didn't break even and was reopened for a second season during 9th May to 31st October 1925, but turnout was half of the previous year and the exhibition was shut for good in October 1925.

The Canada exhibition area with boating lake, a sight I'm sure Mary would have enjoyed.



Map of the location of Wembley to London, roughly 12 miles.

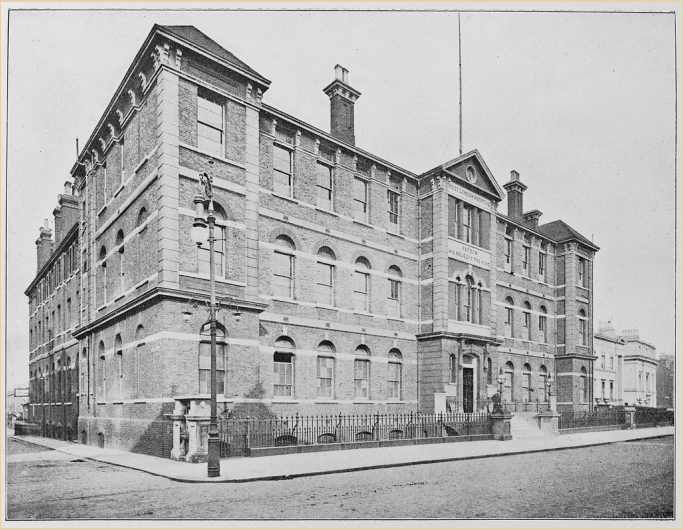
Viewed from above, the exhibition covered a wide area. The train line brought visitors directly into the site, just out of shot due south is a roller-coaster and amusement area.

Below, a roller-coaster, dancing and amusement area.

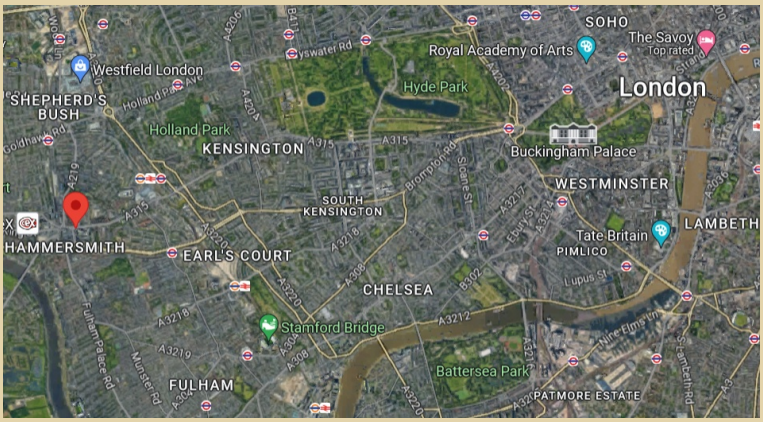
The "World's Sweetheart" in West London

Miss Mary Pickford and Mr. Douglas Fairbanks, the two film stars, now visiting London, at the West London Hospital, where they launched an appeal for £5,000 for X-ray work

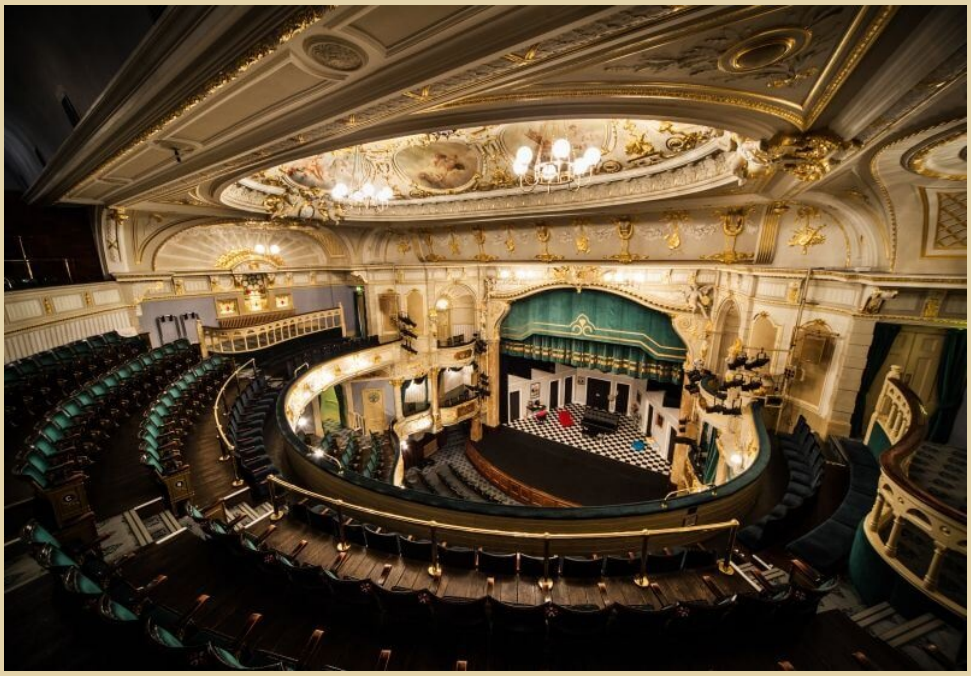
15th May 1924 - Douglas and Mary in the ‘West London Hospital’ (202 Hammersmith Road, W6 7DG), where they launched an appeal to raise £5000 for an X-ray department for the needy.



The hospital was founded in 1856 and moved to the building above In 1860, the hospital's accident and emergency department closed in the 1970’s, In 1993 its remaining services relocated to nearby hospital’s, after which the building was sold and used for offices.

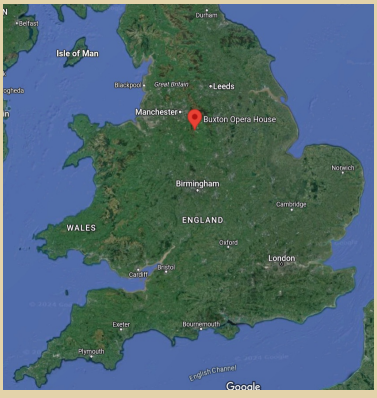


1925



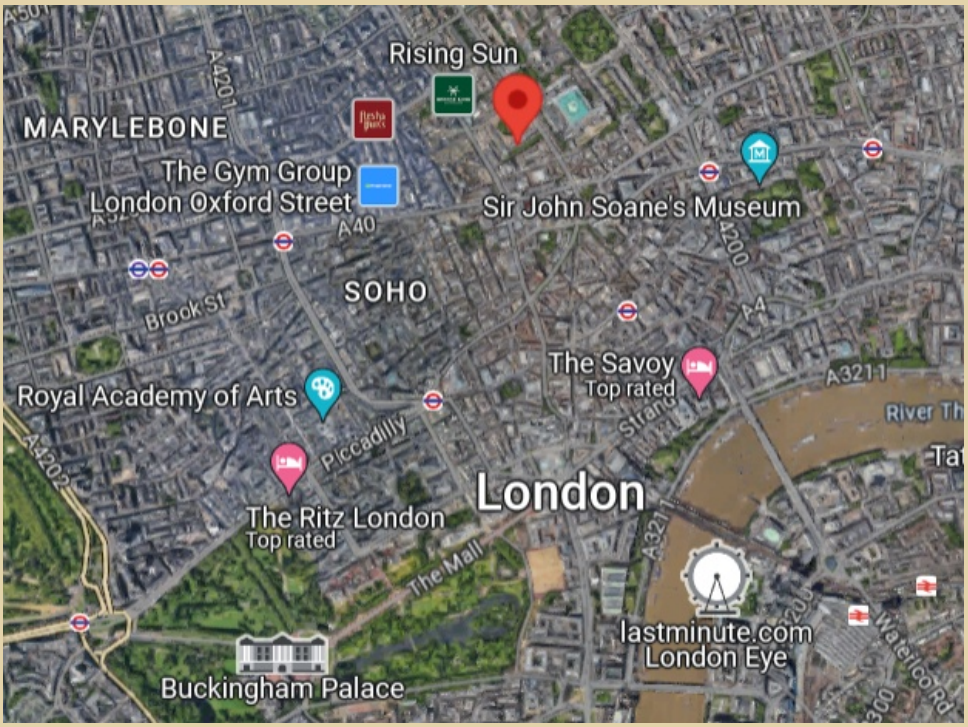
Douglas and Mary visited Buxton again on 28th October 1925 (after the previous year's visit), to watch the legendary Russian ballerina, Anna Pavlova, and her performance of the Dying Swan at the Buxton Opera House.

Whilst there are no known photo's of this trip, I have included the original location building which is still used today, and inside view, undoubtedly Mary and Douglas would have been in one of the lower boxes near the stage.



1926

Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford arrive at the Earl of Oxfords residence at 44 Bedford Square, London, Wednesday 30th June 1926.



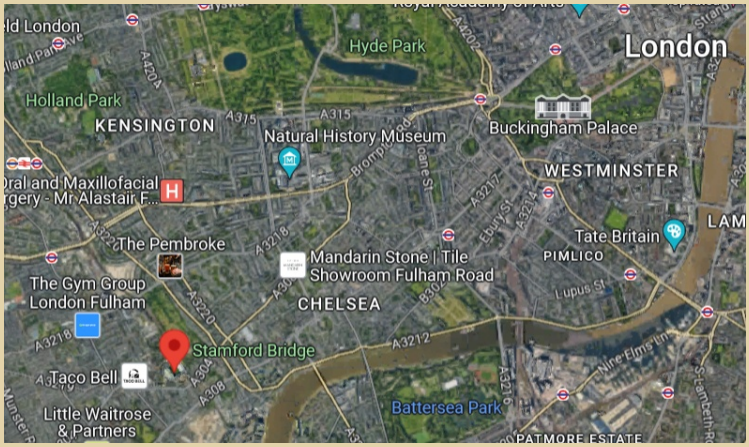
Map location of 44 Bedford Square in central London (red marker).

NOW & THEN

Top (1926) / Bottom (Modern)
Apart from all the removal of the ivy on the brickwork, the buildings have remained the same. The steps on the far left on the modern photograph are the one's Mary is standing on in 1926. The houses across the road at the end of the row are easily recognizable with the doorway arch and window shapes.

Douglas and Mary at Stamford Bridge, London, Saturday 3rd July 1926, to watch the Amateur Athletic Association Championships take place.

A view of the track and stand Mary and Douglas would have sat in, the photo above was taken a week before during a previous athletics event.



Map view of the location of Stamford Bridge in the Chelsea area of London.

NOW & THEN

Top (1922) / Bottom (Modern)
Both photo's are viewed from roughly the same angle with the train line running behind the main stand (where Mary and Douglas sat)

1928

MOVING STAIRS TO SOUTHERN RLY
& WAY OUT TO STREET
PASSIONS RUN DEEP ON THE NORTHERN LINE
UNDERGROUND
DIRECTED BY ANTHONY ASQUITH
STARRING ELISSA LANDI, BRIAN AHERNE, CYRIL MCLAGLEN, NORAH BARING

May 1928 - Norah Baring, The Countess of Oxford and Asquith, and Mary Pickford during the filming of Anthony Asquith's Underground, London.

Poster image (left) of Anthony Asquith's drama film ‘Underground’, which was released 3rd December 1928.

One possible location for the photo on the previous page is ‘Lots Road Power Station’ in the Chelsea area of London.
Top image, the crane scene in the film which fit’s the angle and outside location for the shot. Middle image, more recent photo from the same angle. Bottom image, 2024 image, but of possible viewing location in 1928.

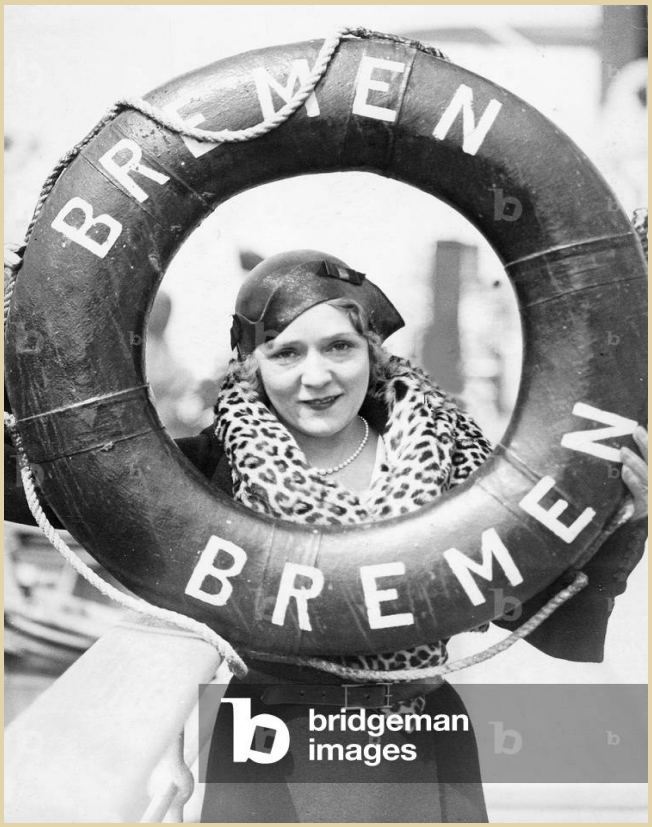
1929

21st October 1929: At left is Lady Louis Mountbatten, with whom the Fairbanks are staying with during their visit. (Brook House 113 Park Lane in Mayfair, London).

NOW & THEN

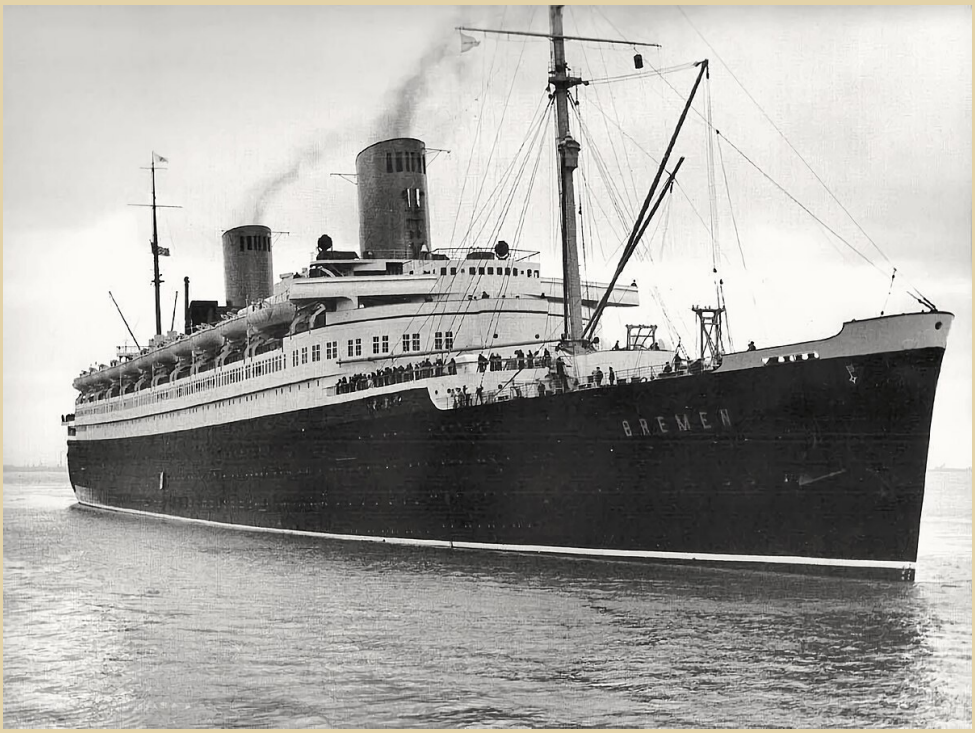
Top (1929) / Bottom (2024)
On the right you can clearly see the window arches in the modern view, and above the car roof in the 1929 photo, then the two large windows of the house to the left of them. On the far left you can make out the rounded porch beams in both images. Sadly nothing remains of the building itself, after being sold in 1931, it has been demolished twice, most recently in 1998 and is now luxury apartments.

1931



Mary Pickford with a life preserver aboard the ocean liner 'Bremen' of the Norddeutscher Lloyd on its arrival in Southampton, England. 18th May 1931.

Aboard the fast steamer 'Bremen'. From left: the writer Joseph Hergesheimer, the actress Lillian Gish, the captain of the 'Bremen' Ziegenbein, Mary Pickford, and the playwright, actor and composer Noel Coward.



SS Bremen of the Norddeutscher Lloyd line. Had her maiden voyage in 1929 and set a new record crossing time of 4d 17h 42m.

In 1939 she was commissioned for use in WW2. In 1941 she was deliberately set ablaze in act of arson. Finally in 1942 she was dismantled for the steel for munitions.

Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford together in their London hotel on May 18th 1931. Pickford arrived on board the Bremen, and drove up to London in a car which her husband had sent to Southampton to meet her.

Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford having press photo’s taken in their hotel room, London, 18 May 1931

NOW & THEN

Top - 19th May 1931: Fairbanks (pictured 3rd from right) followed by hoards of fans, suffered defeat in the first day's play at Westward Ho! Golf Championship meeting.

Douglas Fairbanks was defeated by one hole by JR Abercrombie in the first round. A large gallery, including many girls, followed him around the course. Picture shows Douglas Fairbanks walking over the bridge to the 18th green.

Bottom – Modern view of the bridge location, where sheep continue to use the bridge!

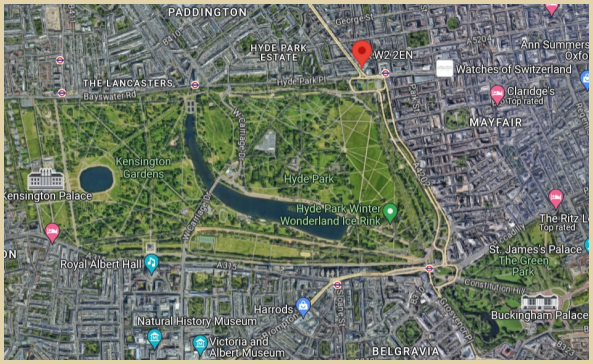
Map view of the location of the Westward Ho! Golf course, located in the English county of Devon. Modern driving times are around 4 hours, back then slower cars and no motorways could have doubled that travel time.

21st May 1931: Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford play golf.

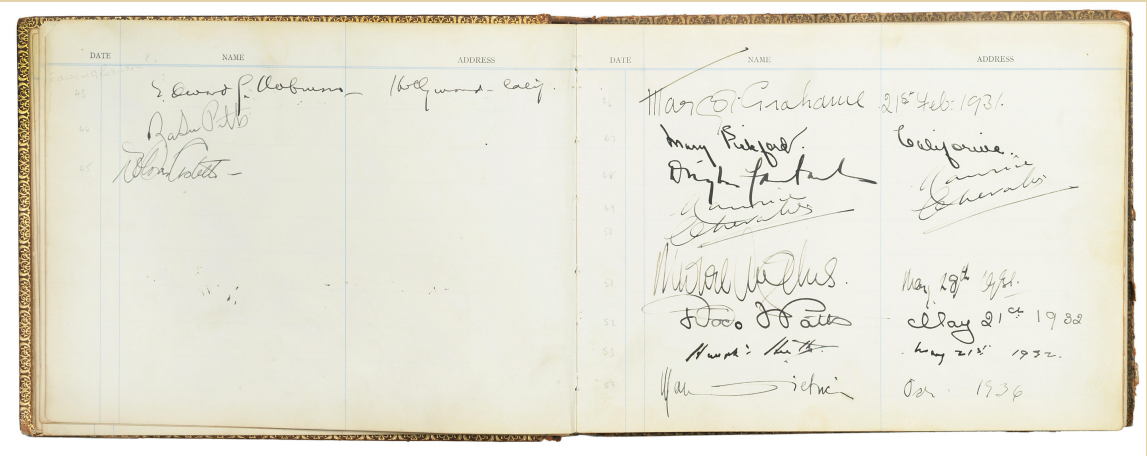
It is unknown if the location is still ‘Westward Ho!’ Since Douglas was knocked out in the first round 2 days before, this still could have morning practice (Mary has her golf shoes on, but has a coat on during the probably chilly duration).

Or maybe this was another golf course entirely, sadly the background detail is not enough to compare to modern venue’s.

Mary and Douglas signing the visitors book at The Regal Theatre, Marble Arch, London, where Mary is appearing to present her new film Kiki, on the May 23rd, 1931.



Left - map location (red highlight) of the Regal Theatre. The building itself was opened in 1928, then taken over by Odeon in 1945 only to be hit by one of the last bombs to hit London in WW2. It did reopen later that year, but eventually closed in 1964. A new construction of offices, shops and single screen Odeon cinema opened in 1967. This then closed in 1996 and split into 5 smaller screens, before finally closing for good and was demolished in 2016 to be replaced with an all office building.



The very guestbook Mary and Douglas were signing in the top picture, pictured above when it went to auction in 2014, a total of 128 autographs were within including Boris Karloff and Alfred Hitchcock, it sold for a seemingly low £812.50

London, Piccadilly - Mary and Douglas going for a trip in a Rolls Royce convertible.

Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks - Waterloo Station, 27th May 1931.

1937

Mary arrived at Southampton, England on the liner ‘RMS Berengaria’ from America .She has come to England to meet up with actor Buddy Rogers who is already here. Photo’s (top) preparations take place before arrival. (bottom) waving on arrival at Southampton. 10th March 1937.

The ‘SS Imperator’ was in service from 1913, and like other vessels at the time, was seized to be used during WW1 as a troop vessel.

Handed back to Cunard in 1919, and renamed ‘RMS Berengaria’, retired in 1938 due to several electrical fires on-board, later sold for scrap in 1939, just two years after Mary voyaged on her.

Can’t find speed records for this vessel, but she did 23.5 knots, 6 knots slower (20%) than the SS Normandie (4d14h), so estimates for the Atlantic crossing put it around 5 days 12 hours.

Fellow passenger ex-heavyweight boxed Max Baer (pictured on-board sitting next to Mary before departure).

Flowers from her Fiance. Mary Pickford gave a reception at her London hotel . She plans to remain in London for the King’s Coronation. Photo shows Mary Pickford arranging a basket of flowers sent her by husband Buddy Rogers in her suite at the Claridge's hotel, London. 10th March 1937.

Mary meets up with Buddy Rogers in London later that evening who was here on prior arrangements.

11th March 1937 - Mary Pickford meets up with Alexander Korda. Mary Pickford left her hotel in London with Mr Alexander Korda head of London Film Productions, for luncheon at the Denham studios. (detailed more in the 1946 section).

Map below shows the location of Claridge's hotel in London. (highlighted red).

NOW & THEN

Top (1937) - Mary and Alexander Korda outside Claridge's Hotel, London.

Bottom (2024) - Arches on both images on the building on the left match, further down the window at an angle matches the 1937 picture.

On the right (below) Claridge's Ball Room entrance on Brooke Street, with the overhanging entrance porch seen behind Korda's head on the picture above. The railing's alongside have long been removed.

11th March 1937 - Mary Pickford lunches with Alexander Korda and Charles Laughton at Denham studios. Mary Pickford lunched with Mr Alexander Korda head of London Film Productions, and Charles Laughton, the actor, in the studio restaurant at Denham, Bucks. Mr Laughton who is appearing in 'I, Claudius', had come straight from the studio and was still in costume.

24th March 1937 - Mary Pickford chooses 17 year old girl as Marlow's Coronation Carnival Queen. Mary Pickford acting as judge, chose 17 year old Miss Alice Frith from 16 competitors as the Queen for the Coronation Carnival at Marlow, Buckinghamshire. The carnival will take place on Coronation Day.

3 days later, Mary leaves for a shorter tour of Europe, leaving England on the 27th March 1937, to later return for the King's Coronation in May.

Preparations for Coronation Day were taking place, Mary leaves Claridge's Hotel (London, Mayfair)

Video - https://www.britishpathe.com/asset/119745/

NOW & THEN

Top (1937) - Mary left England late March for Europe and briefly returned to America in late April, she returned on the RMS Queen Mary in early May 1937 and resided in the M71 suite (now known as the King George Suite).

Bottom (Modern) - You can clearly see the original desk and mirrors Mary used on the left side of the image, before the modern sockets and appliances were added.

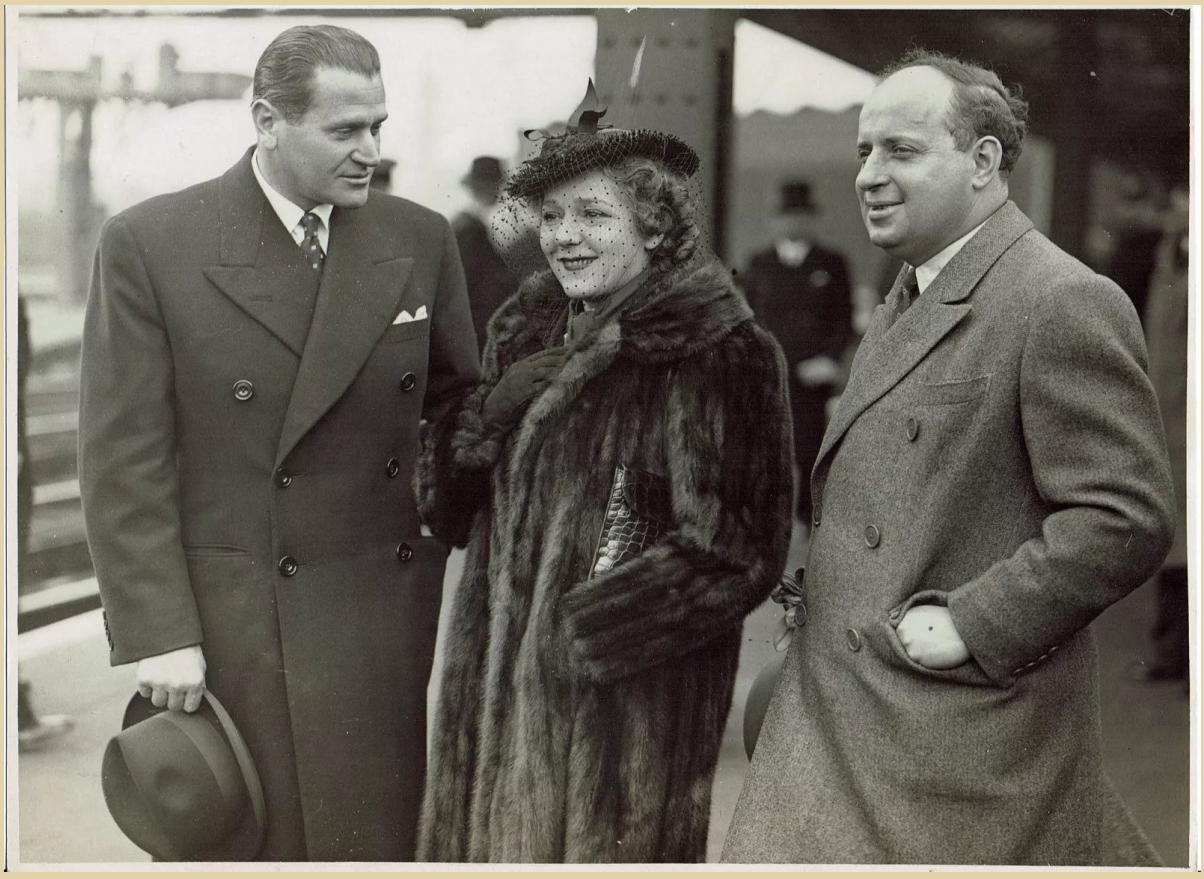
RMS Queen Mary, the ocean liner Mary returned to England on in May 1937. The ship’s maiden voyage was in 1936 and set the fastest transatlantic crossing with a time of 3 days, 23 hours.

1938

Mary Pickford arrives in England on the SS Normandie. 6th April, 1938

Sir Alexander Korda Hungarian-born British film producer, and Mary Pickford Canadian actress, April 6, 1938.

Actress Mary Pickford with film producers David Rose (left) of Metro Goldwyn Meyer and Murray Silverstone of United Artists after she arrived at Waterloo Station, London, April 6th 1938.



More images of Mary Pickford Waterloo Station, London, April 6th 1938.

1939

Mary Pickford and her husband, Buddy Rogers, on their arrival at Southampton, England, on June 5th, 1939, on board the SS Normandie. They have come for a holiday.

“SS Normandie” was in service between 1935-1942. Was one of the fastest passengers ships at the time, with average transatlantic crossing times of 4 days and 14 hours. (although it did set the record of 3d, 22h, 7m in 1937). It was transformed into a troopship for World War II, but during transformation it caught fire, capsized and it was deemed to costly to salvage her, she was scrapped in 1946 having never returned to sea.

From left to right, actors Mary Pickford, her husband Charles 'Buddy' Rogers, Evelyn Laye and her husband Frank Lawton, and Noël Coward at a Theatrical Garden Party at the Ranelagh Gardens, London, Tuesday 6th June 1939.

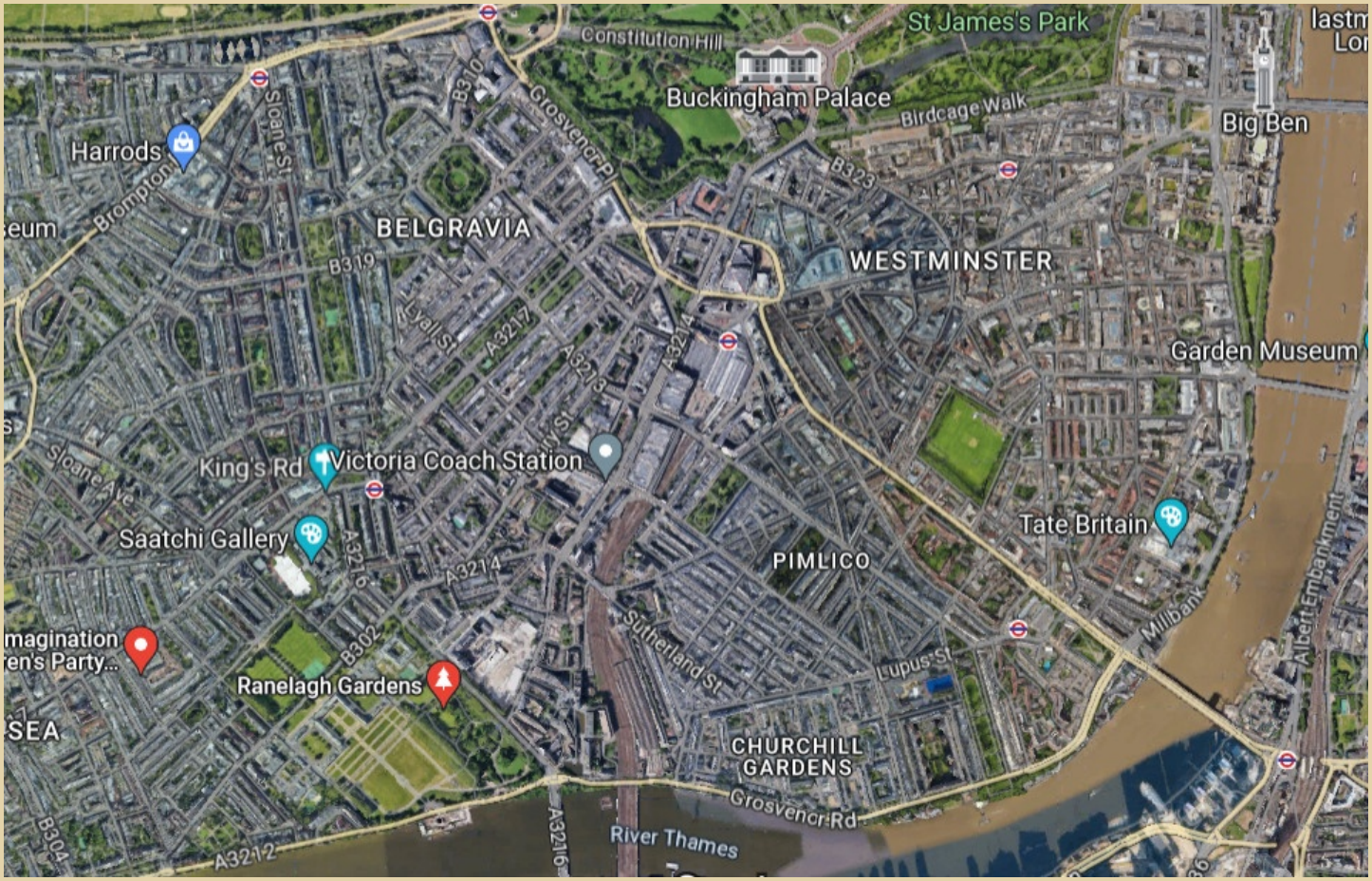
Video Clips

https://www.britishpathe.com/asset/120225/

https://www.britishpathe.com/asset/44110/

Mary shocked to discover she is being filmed inside one of the tents at the garden party.

Ranelagh Gardens is situated on the river Thames in London, near Chelsea and opposite Battersea.



13th June 1939 - Mary and Buddy travelled upto Gleneagle's golf club in Scotland.

The Gleneagle's hotel location in the UK (top left) and closer view from above and the golf course. It is currently unknown what reason they visited, and for how long.

The hotel shortly after transformed into a military hospital 3 months after their visit in September 1939 during the outbreak of WW2.

1946

25th March 1946 - Mary Arrives at Hurn airport, Hampshire, England by a pan American Clipper, gives a little speech,is given a bouquet of flowers.

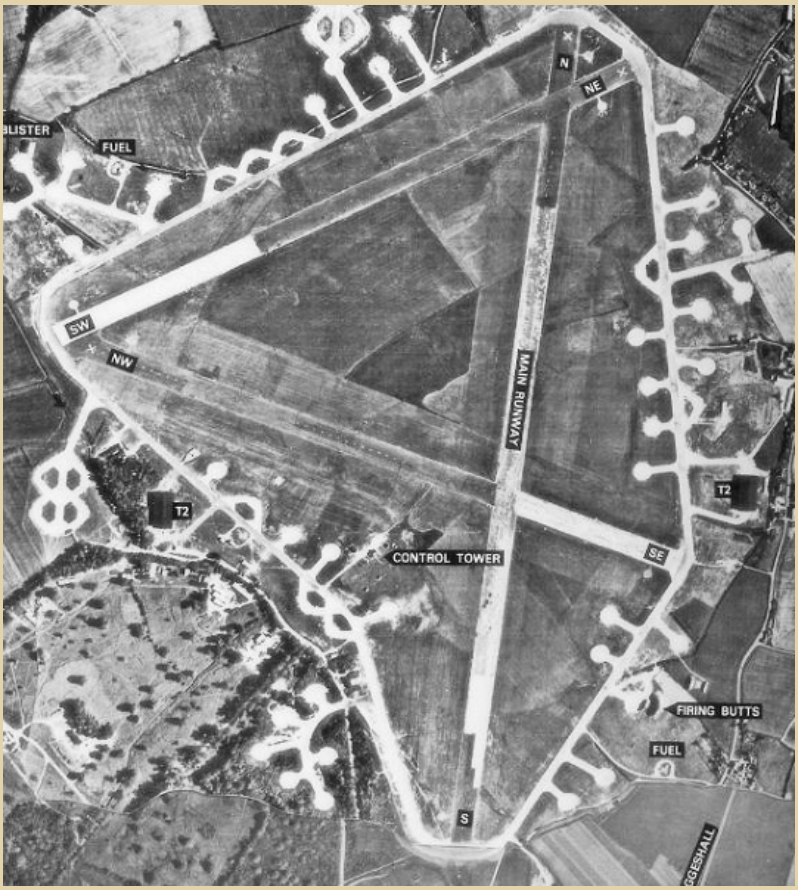
Makes a short speech, saying it is lovely to be back in England and what good weather it is. She also thanks people from the film trade who have given her the flowers.

Video Clip 1 - https://www.britishpathe.com/asset/136576/
Video Clip 2 - https://www.britishpathe.com/asset/71068/

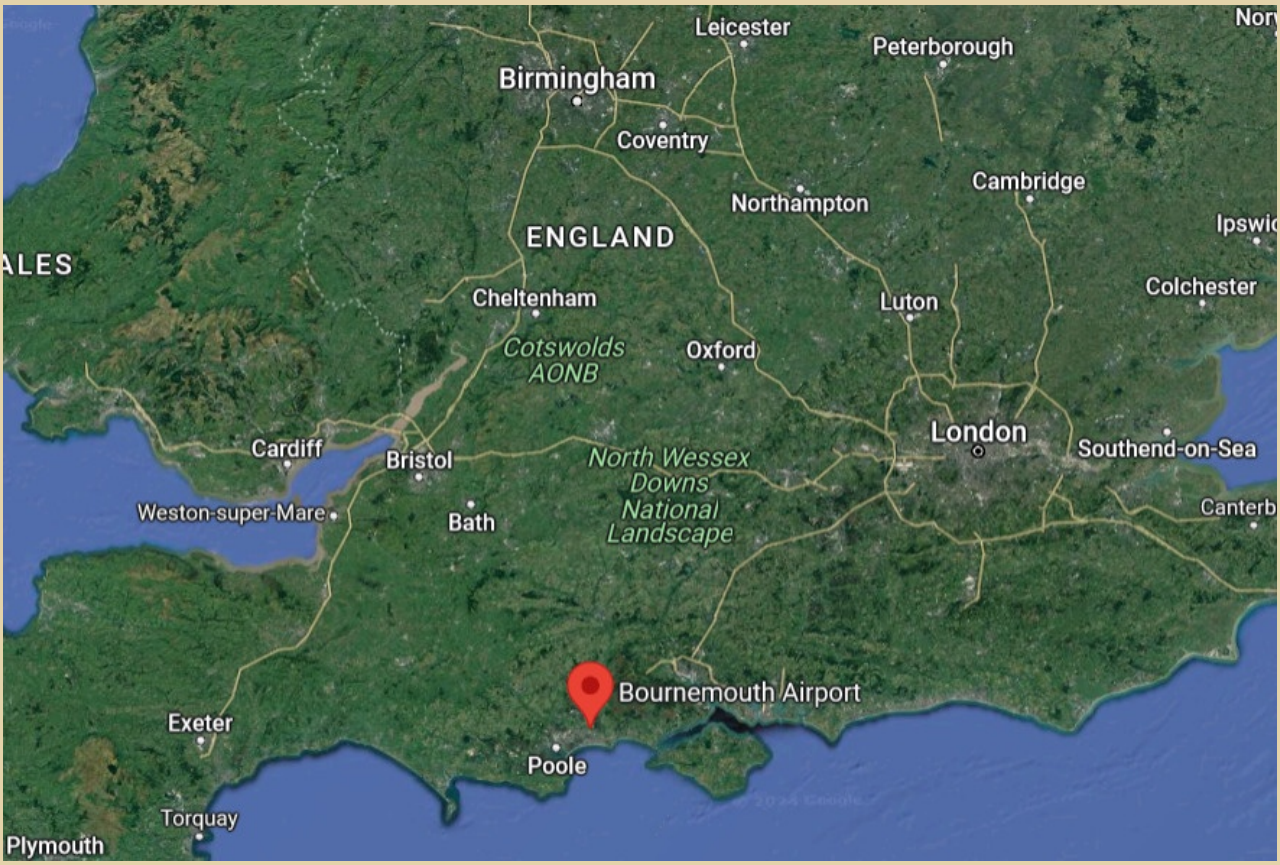
Mary Pickford actress talks to the press after arriving at Hurn Airport (Hampshire) Star of the silent screen wearing a fur coat holding a bouquet of flowers and talking into a microphone.

This was the first time Mary flew into England, all her previous visits she has made by boat, then by train to London.

NOW & THEN



Above - Hurn Airport taken July 1946, just four months after Mary's visit.
Below - Bournemouth (Hurn) Airport 2024.



Bournemouth Airport (Hurn Airport) location in England. The distance is around 101 miles, which would have taken 2-3 hours to drive Mary from the airport to her hotel in London.

History

Hurn Airport, now known as Bournemouth Airport. Started life as RAF Hurn in 1941 and built for the military in World War II. It was then transferred to civilian control in 1944 as Hurn Airpot.

In 1969 it was purchased by Bournemouth Corporation and Dorset County Council who ran it as Bournemouth Airport (later renamed to Bournemouth International Airport, but since 2017 it has referred back to just Bournemouth Airport.

Hurn Airport was the main terminal for international airline flights into the UK until 1948. In 1949 London Airport took over that role (renamed to Heathrow Airport in 1966).

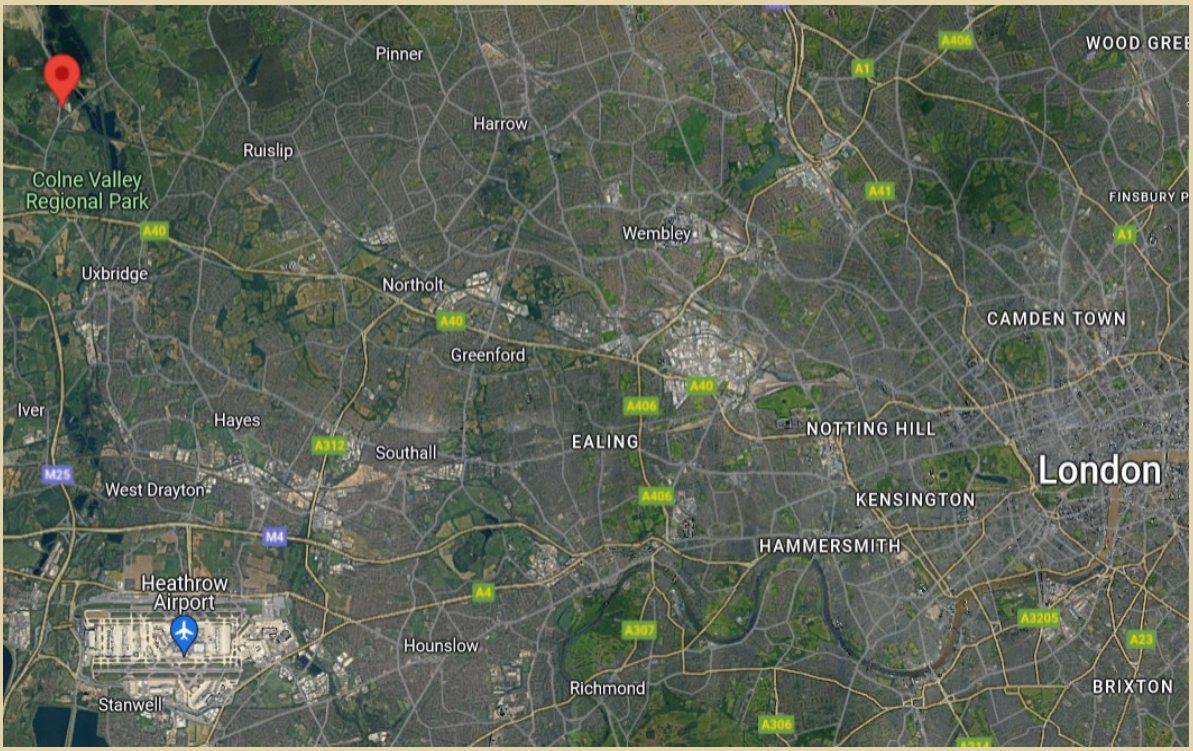
Coincidently London Airport first opened on the same day Mary landed at Hurn Airport, the 25th March 1946!

‘Mary Pickford arrived at Hurn Airport from America this afternoon. She will probably remain in England for two or three weeks, before going to the Continent on behalf of United Artists, the big film concern of which she is part owner’.

Peggy Evans and Mary Pickford records a radio programme in a recording studio at the BBC in London for an item in ‘Picture Parade’ in April 1946.

20th April 1946 - Mary Pickford meets British film director David Lean. Seen here looking-on possibly during filming a scene. (more next page).

April 20th 1946 - London
MARY PICKFORD visiting Director DAVID LEAN and JOHN MILLS on set candid filming GREAT EXPECTATIONS, filmed at Denham Studios, Denham, Buckinghamshire. The film was based on a novel by CHARLES DICKENS. And was released 16th December 1946



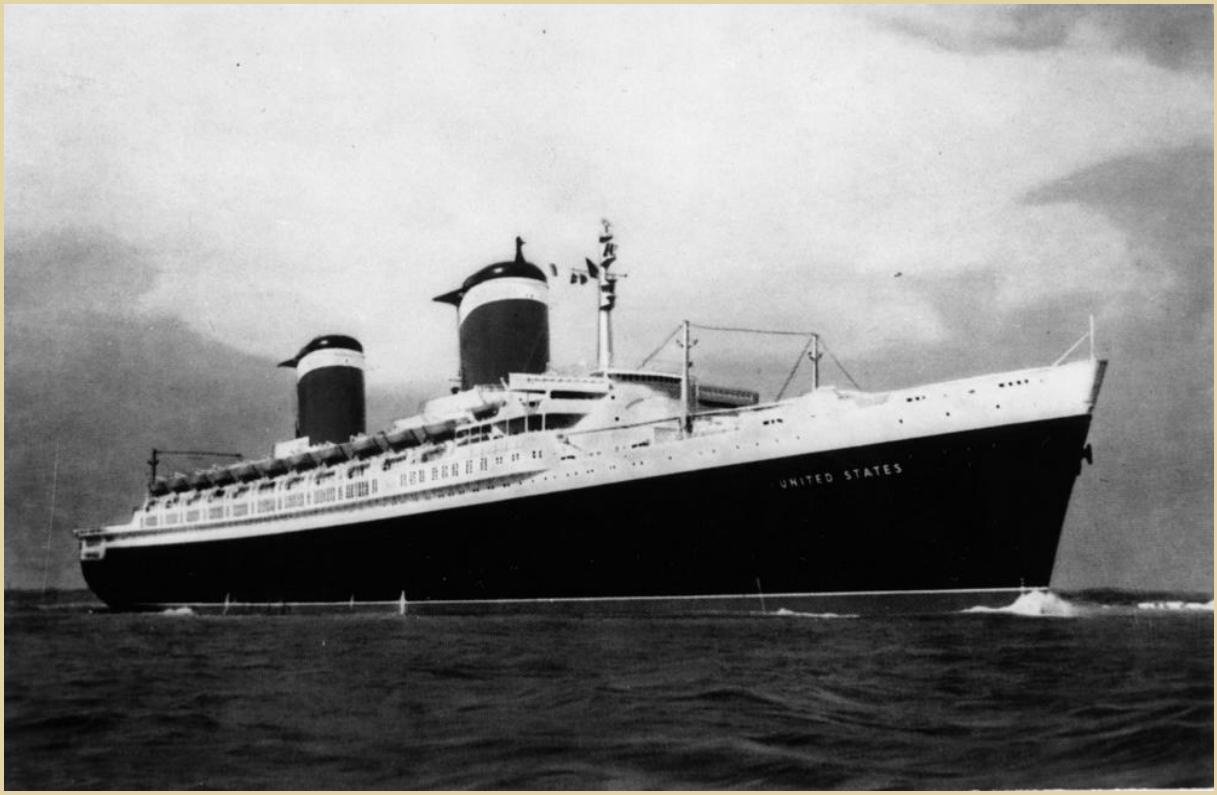
Above – location of Denham Film Studios in relation to the city of London, which is only around 24 miles.

Below – old 1930's photo of the Denham Studios, Denham, Buckinghamshire, which operated from 1936 to 1952 for filming, then rented to the US Air Force until 1961.

After that it was mainly used to record sound movie scores on the sound stages for films like Superman and Star Wars. It was bought by a developer in 1980 and mostly all demolished in 1981, bar the now Grade II listed main building, which is now luxury flats and houses, along with the Art Deco building

1954

No available picture of their 1954 visit as of this time.



May 4th, 1954 -" Sweetheart Of The Silent Screen" Comes To England: An arrival at Southampton on the linear "SS United States" which had previously set a transatlantic record in 1952 of just 3 days and 10 hours (and has never been beaten to this day by any cruise ship/liner).

Mary, who is now 61, is visiting London, Paris, Berlin and Moscow to try and find copies of 220 of the 300 films that she made, which are wanted for a Hollywood Museum.

1955

June 13th, 1955 - Mary Pickford arrives at London Airport (Heathrow). The World's Sweetheart: Sixty two year old, state they plan to make a motor tour of Europe.

Video of Mary and Buddy at London Airport -
https://www.britishpathe.com/asset/251810/

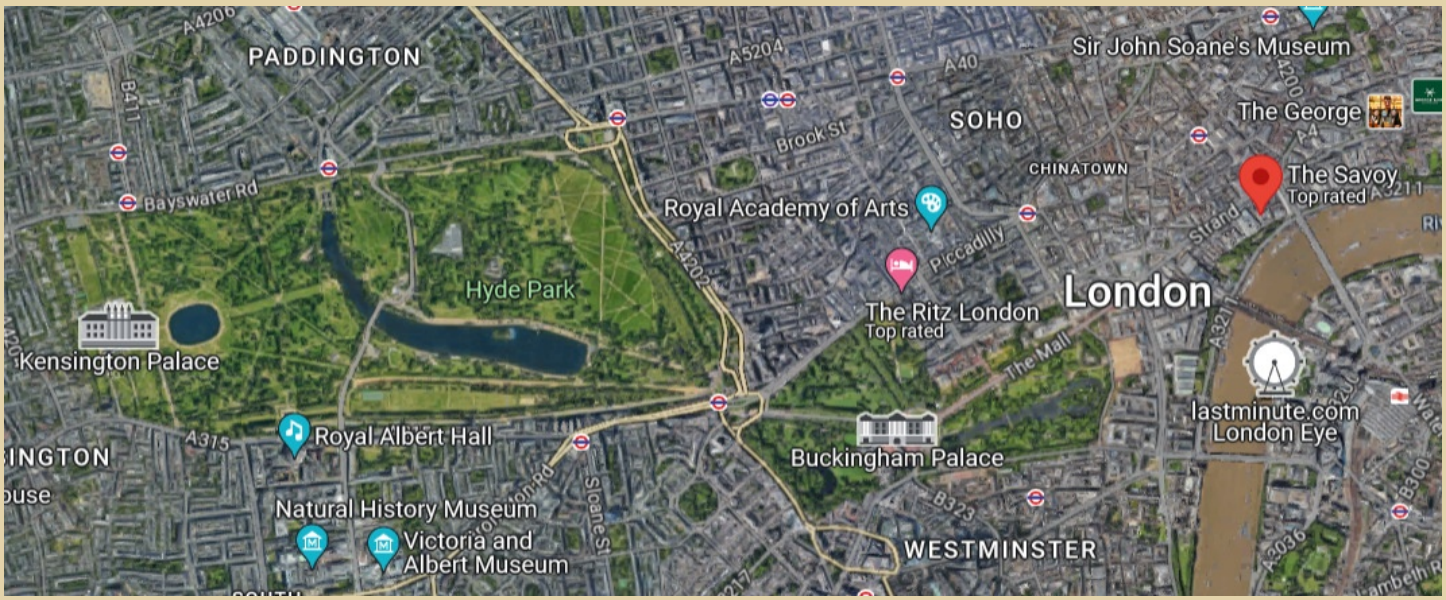
alamy
Image ID: E0MJM9
www.alamy.com

gettyimages
Credit: Evening Standard
2120161583

13th June 1955 - Photo shows Mary Pickford seen in her apartments at the Savoy Hotel this afternoon.

NOW & THEN

Front of the Savoy Hotel, Strand, London WC2R 0EZ.
2020's (left) - 1950's (right). Map location below (red highlight).



alamy
Image ID: E0MJM8
www.alamy.com

17th June 1955. London pigeon takes fancy to Mary's flowing hair.

BBC Radio Interview

When Mary Pickford and Gloria Swanson were in London at the same time earlier this year, Robert Gladwell went to meet them. He asked them similar questions, and this programme combines the replies of two of the greatest stars in half a century of film making. Introduced by Robert Gladwell.

Mary Pickford and Gloria Swanson discuss how their careers began and dispel some of the myths surrounding their image. They also share their views on the impact of talking pictures, introduced in the late 1920s, both on their own working lives and the film industry as a whole, reflecting on the magic of the silent-movie era, which began even before Hollywood was established.

First broadcast: Sun 9th Oct 1955, 13:15 on Light Programme

You can listen to the interview here - https://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/meet-mary-pickford-and-gloria-swanson/zkhky9q

1956

June 13th, 1956 at Southampton, England, on board of the ship “SS United States” from New York. They will visit relations in England, and then go to Spain to see their daughter who is studying there.

1964

Above - Mary Pickford and her husband Charles 'Buddy' Rogers pictured during a visit to Britain 12th May 1964.

13th May 1964 - Mary Pickford and Charles 'Buddy' Rogers sitting on a couch together in their London hotel during a visit to hunt for her old movie reels which she said she wanted for a Hollywood museum.

1965

Mary Pickford arrives at London Airport (later Heathrow) with her third husband Charles 'Buddy' Rogers, Saturday 25th September 1965.

An unknown hotel in London in 1965 (dated as 1965, although comparing images from 1964 hair style, to the other 1965 images in which Mary looks ‘older’ and hair is different makes me think these are from her 1964 trip too.) look possible interview for the Sunday Times newspaper, although I can’t find the article to confirm.

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